

Week Ending Friday, October 29, 1999

**Statement on Signing the Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Park and Gunnison Gorge National Conservation Area Act of 1999**

*October 21, 1999*

Today I have signed into law S. 323, the "Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Park and Gunnison Gorge National Conservation Area Act of 1999."

This Act represents more than a decade of hard work by the people of the Western Slope of Colorado to bring to the Black Canyon of the Gunnison the recognition it deserves. Bipartisan support from the Colorado delegation and both Houses of Congress led this effort to establish the Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Park—our 55th National Park—and the adjacent Gunnison Gorge National Conservation Area. I would like to commend Representatives Mark Udall, Scott McInnis, and Diana DeGette for their leadership on this legislation in the House of Representatives, and I would particularly like to commend and congratulate Senator Ben Nighthorse Campbell, who has worked for over a decade on this effort.

In the 1930s, President Herbert Hoover established and President Franklin D. Roosevelt expanded the Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Monument under the authority provided by the Antiquities Act. S. 323 redesignates the Monument as a National Park and expands its size. These actions add geographical and recreational diversity and protect the rural scenic backdrop of this spectacular gorge. The expansion will also enhance existing park resources and provide greater opportunities for visitor use and enjoyment.

Like other National Parks, the Black Canyon of the Gunnison belongs to all Americans, an heirloom to be passed on from generation to generation. As such, it deserves the highest level of protection to ensure that the

outstanding characteristics and qualities that make it worthy for National Park status will never be degraded.

In the words of geologist Wallace Hansen, "[n]o other canyon in North America combines the depth, narrowness, sheerness, and somber countenance of the Black Canyon of the Gunnison." Through this Act, we recognize for all future generations the unique combination of geologic and biologic features that make the canyon such an awe-inspiring place.

The Act represents a continuing commitment to the protection of our Nation's wilderness resources, by expanding the existing Black Canyon of the Gunnison Wilderness by over 4,400 acres and by establishing the 17,700-acre Gunnison Gorge Wilderness that will be managed by the Bureau of Land Management.

The Act also creates the 57,725-acre Gunnison Gorge National Conservation Area, which includes the Gunnison Gorge Wilderness. This recognition is deserved for an area that offers a variety of natural and geologic features and unsurpassed recreational opportunities. The Bureau of Land Management will be responsible for managing these lands, and as directed by the Act, will develop a management plan to ensure the long-range protection of the conservation area.

Finally, S. 323 calls for a land study for Curecanti National Recreation Area. This study will seek solutions to protect Curecanti's scenic, natural, and cultural resource values and determine the best management strategies for this popular recreation area.

This Act will protect unique natural resources that will continue to be enjoyed by all Americans for many years. We can be proud of the legacy of park, public land, and

wilderness protection that we are leaving for the generations to come.

**William J. Clinton**

The White House,  
October 21, 1999.

NOTE: S. 323, approved October 21, was assigned Public Law No. 106-76. This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

**Statement on Signing the  
Agriculture, Rural Development,  
Food and Drug Administration, and  
Related Agencies Appropriations  
Act, 2000**

*October 22, 1999*

Today I have signed into law H.R. 1906, the "Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2000."

The Act provides \$14.1 billion in discretionary budget authority for programs of the Department of Agriculture and the Food and Drug Administration, including the Special Supplemental Feeding Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC); food safety programs; and various programs to protect and support rural communities.

The Act also provides \$8.6 billion in emergency funds to assist our Nation's farmers and ranchers who are suffering through the second year in a row of low commodity prices and, for many, crop and livestock losses from severe drought and flooding. My Administration will work hard to ensure that these funds are distributed to farm families as soon as possible; however, because the Congress wrote some of the programs in a complex manner, farmers and ranchers need to understand that, for my Administration to implement them fairly, some of the assistance will take some time to provide. This is the second year in a row that substantial additional Federal assistance has been needed, on top of our regular farm programs, due to deficiencies in the 1996 Farm Bill—further evidence that the 1996 Act simply does not provide an adequate farm safety net.

I continue to be concerned that the income assistance in the Act I have signed

today is provided through supplemental Farm Bill income support payments, and therefore is not targeted to producers most in need. These payments are made based on past production, which may have no relation to the crops grown or the market situation facing producers this year, and in some cases payments are made to individuals who are no longer farming. There is now, however, an urgent need for farm assistance, and so I have approved H.R. 1906. But I once again call on the Congress to work with my Administration to fix the 1996 Farm Bill permanently so American producers have the assurance of an adequate farm income safety net, while they continue their work to feed us all.

While the Act's funding for crop and livestock losses from natural disasters has been increased over the amount in the Senate bill, it still will not adequately meet the devastating farm losses in many parts of the country. In addition, H.R. 1906 cuts farm loans by 25 percent from last year, which is simply untenable as we head into a crop year when farmers and lenders alike are saying that they will need even more Federal financing help than last year. The Act also does not include emergency conservation funds to help farmers and rural communities affected by Hurricane Floyd to clear their fields and streams of debris and restore their small waterways. My Administration will work in the remaining days of this session of Congress to secure funding for these and other urgent, unmet needs. In addition, I have asked the Vice President to work with the Department of Agriculture to implement, within existing authorities, measures to improve the operation of various conservation programs.

The additional crop insurance subsidies provided in the Act will help producers afford higher coverage next year, but I call on the Congress to pass long-term crop insurance reform before adjourning this year, to improve this important component of the farm safety net.

The Congress has not provided the full amount of my requested increase for the WIC program, thereby failing to ensure that we can achieve the goal of full participation of 7.5 million women, infants, and children in this vital program. I also remain opposed